

## Message Text

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22/64

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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R 181700Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6211

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

EMBASSY LUXEMBOURG 4244

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN CHANGED TO 33084 VICE 33804 AND  
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: MICHEL PONIATOWSKI STEPS DOWN FROM RI PRESIDEN-  
CY

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REF: PARIS 31764

SUMMARY. MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR MICHEL PONIATOWSKI RELINQUISHED THE PRESIDENCY OF THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY (IR) DECEMBER 17. HE WILL BE REPLACED BY A COLLEGIAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE HEADED BY SECRETARY GENERAL AND RI DEPUTY JACQUES DOMINATI. ON LEAVING THE PRESIDENCY PONIATOWSKI CALLED FOR THE FORMATION OF A "FEDERATION OF CENTRISTS" WITHIN THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY. END SUMMARY.

1. AS EXPECTED, MICHEL PONIATOWSKI HAS STEPPED DOWN FROM HIS POSITION AS HEAD OF PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY. THE OCCASION WAS A MEETING OF THE RI NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN PARIS DECEMBER 16-17. WITH HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE PRESIDENCY, THE PARTY WILL BE LED BY A COORDINATING COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF RI SECRETARY GENERAL JACQUES DOMINATI AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE PARTY'S PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS AND YOUTH MOVEMENT. PONIATOWSKI, HIMSELF, WAS GIVEN THE TITLE OF "FIRST PARTY MILITANT."

2. IN HIS FINAL SPEECH AS RI PRESIDENT, PONIATOWSKI AFFIRMED THAT "NOW MORE THAN EVER" THE RI IS THE "DRIVING FORCE" OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY. HE THEN DUSTED OFF HIS LONG-CHERISHED CONCEPT OF A "FEDERATION OF CENTERISTS" BUILT AROUND THE RI WHICH, IN HIS VIEW, WOULD REFLECT THE ACTUAL SPECTRUM OF PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT EXTENDING "FROM THE CENTER LEFT TO THE CENTER RIGHT."

3. ELABORATING ON PONIATOWSKI'S THEME, JACQUES DOMINATI TOLD THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE THAT, IN ADDITION TO THE RI, THE FEDERATION WOULD INCLUDE CENTER DEMOCRATS, RADICAL SOCIALISTS AND OTHER CENTER FORMATIONS WITHIN THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY. THUS, FOR DOMINATI, THE FEDERATION WOULD ENSURE THAT CENTRIST POSITIONS WHICH ENJOY MAJORITY SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE NATION WOULD BE ACCORDED SIMILAR STATUS WITHIN THE PRESIDENTIAL COALITION.

4. COMMENT: PONIATOWSKI OF COURSE HAD PLEDGED TO GIVE UP THE PRESIDENCY WHEN HE WAS ELECTED TO THE POSITION IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FEBRUARY 1975. GIVEN HIS CONTINUED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD AND HIS TIES WITH MEMBERS OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HIS ULTIMATE CONTROL OVER THE PARTY WILL REMAIN UNAFFECTED BY THIS CHANGE IN TITLES. HIS CALL FOR A "FEDERATION OF CENTRISTS" UNDOUBTEDLY STEMS FOR PRESIDENT GISCARD'S RECENT PLEDGE "TO GOVERN FROM THE CENTER" (REFTEL). SIMILARLY, IT MAY ALSO REFLECT THE PRESIDENT'S LONG-RUMORED HOPE OF EVENTUALLY

WIDENING HIS MAJORITY TO ENCOMPASS ELEMENTS OF THE  
MORE MODERATE LEFT.

5. THE RI REPORTEDLY HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO SOUND OUT  
RADICAL SOCIALISTS AND OTHER CENTRIST FORMATIONS ON  
THE FEDERATION CONCEPT. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE IDEA  
WILL MEET WITH MUCH ENTHUSIASM. THE RI IS GENERALLY  
CONSIDERED AS THE MOST CONSERVATIVE ELEMENT IN THE  
PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY AND IT WILL TAKE SOME DOING TO  
CONVINCE CENTRISTS TO JOIN WITH IT IN SUCH AN UNDER-  
TAKING. MOREOVER, PONIATOWSKI'S PROPOSAL IS CERTAIN TO  
REKINDLE FEARS THAT LONG-RUN RI AIMS INCLUDE POACHING  
FROM CENTER PARTY ELECTORAL PRESERVES. SIMILARLY, WHILE  
WE HAVE SEEN NO REACTION FROM THE GAULLISTS (UDR),  
PONIATOWSKI'S REMARKS, IGNORING THE UDR ENTIRELY AND  
AGAIN TERMING THE RI THE FIRST PARTY OF THE MAJORITY,  
SEEM CERTAIN TO RAISE SUSPICIONS ON THAT QUARTER AS  
WELL.  
RUSH

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS, POLITICAL PARTIES  
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